



Verbal Act (name giving trilogue)

2019
workshop + mixed-media installation (calligraphy, video on a smart phone, notebook, coin, fabric, plants, etc.)

discussion: ca. 60 min
as a part of the project *After-Ripening & Corruption: Verbal Acts & Graphic Movements* at the Bag Factory, Johannesburg

Playing with the phonological affinity with the local languages, I experimented in verbal acts via several ‘essays’ that are liberated from the literal and logical. *Verbal Act (name giving trilogue)* is one of them, where I invited two South Africans to a workshop, asking to give me a new name through discussion.

GIVEN BACKGROUNDS

Many cultures have rituals around giving name, and various ways to name the babies - inheriting from the ancestors, taking from an aspired person, reflecting the wish of the parents, following the numerology, etc.

I came to search for a new name after experiencing the audience reading my works biased by my name that indicates my gender and origin, and also from my interest to be relieved from what I might owe from my ancestors and from the wish of my parents.

TRANSLATION OF NAMES

Bantu languages* and my mother tongue Japanese are phonologically similar, and I met many people in South Africa whose names sound like Japanese. Finding common grounds with the worldview and traditions of the Bantu ethnic group, I became curious what my name can be in the local context.

*a family of languages spoken by the majority of South Africans

I asked two of my friends to be my naming ‘parents’ – Sandile Radebe and Diana Hyslop, fellow artists in whose personality and practice I could see mine in a respective manner.

DIALOGUE with THREE CHAIRS

On 18 October 2019, the fiftieth day after my arrival to South Africa, the trilogue took place in my studio. I placed three chairs forming a triangle, and a camera on a tripod to document the talk. I initiated the talk by telling why I want to have another name and why I chose them, and asked them to come up with my new name in the local context through discussion.

We discussed referring to our respective experiences and cultures: Sandile grew up in a traditional Zulu family, and he manifested his view through storytelling backed with lived experiences and theories; Diana showed her inclination to esoteric philosophies, such as numerology and fatalism; and I referred to various cultures I have lived in last two decades. There was a rich path with deviations to exchange our experiences and perspectives on life and world.

MUSA MOOR

We reached to the new name ‘Musa Moor’. ‘Musa’ is a Zulu translation of my Japanese official name that means graceful, an Arabic name corresponding to Moses, and homonym of the Latin name of banana plant. ‘Moor’ refers to the black-ness, for me wearing black clothes. Pronouncing the names together, the liaison creates the sound resembling to ‘amour’, love in French.

Referring to Japanese tradition, I wrote the name in black ink on paper. At the presentation, it formed a sort of altar, with a phone showing the video of the trilogue and other related objects.

The name also brought me a new question - what sort of works are expected from a person called ‘Musa Moor’.



(left page) a still from the video capturing the discussion with Sandile and Diana (right page, from top to bottom) my studio, a scene of the discussion; an installation view with a calligraphy presenting the name ‘Musa Moor’ and a video of the dialogue, along with the objects related to the work (bananas, plants, fabric, coin, drawer); installation detail with a smartphone showing the video of discussion, and notebook that traces my practice and thoughts in Johannesburg

